Branching Out

NOVA SCOTIA

Our Schools as Centres of Excellence

Over the past two months, I have had the privilege of presenting accreditation plaques to schools which have successfully completed the accreditation process—the first schools in Nova Scotia to have done so. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding work being done by these schools and all schools currently involved in the accreditation process. The pride and enthusiasm of the people who are making their schools centres of excellence is evident throughout the schools and the communities they serve.

Once again, congratulations on a job well done and best wishes for continuing efforts.

Dr. Alan Lowe, Senior Executive Director, Public Schools Branch

Writers in Action 10 and 11 Workshop

School board Writers in Action 10–11 lead teams will convene at the Old Orchard Inn, May 13–15. These three days will focus on a Writers' Workshop approach to teaching writing in high school.

On May 13, members of the Writers In Action 10-11 Provincial Team will facilitate sessions on topics such as "What is good writing?", "Effective, Descriptive Feedback", "Teachers as Writers: The Importance of Modelling Writing for Students", "Image is Everything: The Art of Screenwriting", "Let's Put Poetry in Its Place!", and "Essay Writing." Participants will have many opportunities to write and share their writing with others.

Penny Kittle, literacy coach and high school teacher from Conway, New Hampshire, will conduct a Writers' Workshop on May 14 and 15. Penny is the author of four Heinemann books—*Public Teaching: One Kid at a Time* (2003); *Inside Writing: How to Teach the Details of Craft* (2005), co-authored with Donald H. Graves; *The Greatest Catch: A Life in Teaching* (2005); and *Write Beside Them: Risk, Voice, and Clarity in High School Writing* (2008).

Write Beside Them will be the anchor text of her two-day writing workshop. This resource will also be provided to grades 10 and 11 English language arts teachers.

Career Development 10, a New Course Option

In 2009–2010, high schools may begin to offer Career Development 10 to all incoming students. The course, previously available only through the Options and Opportunities program, helps students assess their skills and interests, explore career options, and develop a career plan. Students also learn to be safe and successful in the workplace.

Teaching Financial Management

The City, an exciting resource for teaching financial management developed by Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, has been approved for use in Career Development 10 and Career Development 11 and also for students in Math Essentials 10, Math Essentials 11, and Mathematics Foundations 11.

While this resource has a web-based approach to teaching financial management, it is recommended that teachers use it as a tool to promote classroom discussion related to personal financial decisions.

The Money Belt <http://www.themoneybelt.ca> is a gateway to financial learning. Users build knowledge of and confidence in handling finances and decisions about money. Students get practical tips and test their knowledge about managing money without the risks and consequences of real life.

Created by the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, The Money Belt should help students develop financial life skills.

BRANCHING OUT is published 3 times yearly in October, February, and May.
Back issues are available at http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca/branching.shtml
If you wish to receive the newsletter, please send an e-mail to lrt@ednet.ns.ca.

What are You Doing this Summer?

The Summer Opportunities booklet, which includes offerings from various institutions and organizations, is now available. It can be accessed online at http://www.nstu.ca/pklot/slo09web.pdf

To register for Summer Institutes being provided through the NS Department of Education, please visit http://www.ednet.ns.ca and choose *Register for Summer Institutes* from the menu on the right side of the screen.

Literacy Summer Institutes July 30–31

Concurrent sessions will be held at the Old Orchard Inn for two days on July 30–31.

Ralph Fletcher, author of *Boy Writers* and many other books will work with grades primary–6 teachers to examine the best ways of teaching writing to include boys' unique interests and learning styles.

Topics will include creating boy-friendlier writing classrooms, the cycle of the craft of writing, the importance of choice, conferring with student writers, using texts to stretch young writers, and moving the writing beyond the personal narrative.

Michael Smith, co-author of *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys: Literacy in the Lives of Young Men* with Jeff Wilhelm, will work with teachers of grades 7–12 to explore what motivates young men's engagement in their out-of-school activities and what that means for teaching reading and writing.

More specifically, we will work on how to provide practice to develop students' competence and on developing inquiry skills and strategies that will give them a reason to display that competence.

Mi'kmaq Education Agreement Signed

The province of Nova Scotia and the Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, [key-nah-MAT-nuh-way] signed an historic agreement that will improve educational opportunities for Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaw students on November 7, 2008.

Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey is the organization responsible for aboriginal education.

The five-year agreement replaces existing tuition agreements between Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey's 10-member bands and school boards, with a common tuition agreement between the organization and the province.

For more information, please visit the Mi'kmaq Liaison Office at http://mikmaq.ednet.ns.ca/

Summer Institute: *Literacy in the Early Grades: What's Happening??* July 6–7

A workshop will be held at the Old Orchard Inn on July 6–7, 2009, featuring Lori Jamison, author of *Early Literacy Instruction in Kindergarten: Marvellous Minilessons for Teaching Beginning Writing K–3* and many other works based largely on reading and writing in the early years.

This workshop will examine what experiences in literacy may look like in the early years. Specifically, the focus will be on grades primary and 1. Topics will include getting to know our youngest students and ensuring thatclassroom decisions are made based on developmentally appropriate practice and the understanding that one size certainly does not fit all, especially as students enter public school. We will also examine the definitions of "play" and how play in the early years is a vehicle to address outcomes, and not an add-on to curriculum.

Math and Science Summer Institute August 5–7, 2009

A three–day summer institute for teachers of mathematics and/or science is being offered by Nancy Chisholm, IT Integration Consultant. The session will examine tools available to teachers to enhance their teaching and their students' learning of concepts in math and science.

The institute is listed in the *Summer Learning Opportunities for Teachers 2009* booklet as two separate titles: *IT's Mathematical* and *IT's Scientific*, but is actually a single workshop. Teachers may register for either workshop, depending on their area of interest. Part of the workshop will include short sessions and "just-in-time" instruction in the use of some tools, such as *The Geometer's Sketchpad*, *Autograph*, science probes, and *Microsoft Office* tips. Teachers should come prepared to work on activities for their classroom situation.

A maximum of 25 participants can be accepted for this workshop. It will be held in Halifax at the second floor classroom in Brunswick Place.

May 19–22 is Aboriginal Awareness Week

Media Resources from Learning Resources and Technology Services

Media Library: See new loan and dubbing materials available by visiting our online catalogue at http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca Choose Search online catalogue. Click on the New Materials link. For more information, or to order materials, please call (902) 424-2440. Order pre-made titles from our lists online at http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca/media_library/express/Video_Express.shtml

EBSCO Periodical database: EBSCO provides a series of online bibliographic and full text databases so that you and your students can find information, pictures and citations on curriculum related topics. You can access EBSCO at http://search.ebscohost.com

ImagesProject: Need a photo to use in a school project? Visit the ImagesProject, a web-based collection of images for Nova Scotia public school program use. Nova Scotia students and teachers who are on Ednet may freely download, use and modify images from the ImagesProject website for curriculum purposes. Go to http://imagesproject.ednet.ns.ca

Teachers TV

Thousands of videos about educational issues, funded by the UK Department for Children, Schools and Families, are available online to support professional learning communities for all grades and curriculum areas. Teachers can view materials and post comments or reflections. Please visit http://www.teachers.tv

Mathematics Curriculum Revision

Revision of mathematics curriculum for grades primary–8 is underway in Nova Scotia.

While our current curriculum is considered to be world class, our investigation of new research and trends in mathematics education requires that we take an in-depth look at its entire structure.

We will begin comprehensive consultation on the draft curriculum in fall 2009, with feedback required by mid-February 2010.

Pilots of revised mathematics curriculum will begin September 2010, and implementation of revised mathematics curriculum will begin September 2011. The process of curriculum revision for grades 9–12 will begin April 2010.

Gaelic Language Program Grants

The Department of Education, English Program Services, is once again pleased to offer program grants for school boards wishing to provide students with opportunities to learn the Gaelic language.

Study of the Gaelic language provides students with opportunities to interact with the Gaelic community and to deepen their knowledge of a shared heritage, traditionally passed down "o ghlùin gu glùin." It promotes positive attitudes toward cultural diversity and commonality and fosters students' appreciation of Nova Scotia's diverse heritage.

For details and an application form, contact Mary Fedorchuk, Program Co-ordinator P–12, English Program Services, at (902) 424-5436 or e-mail fedorcm@gov.ns.ca

Model Legislature 2009

The seventh annual Nova Scotia Model Legislature is slated for May 22–24, 2009. Once again, 52 high school students from across the province, along with teachers and parents, will gather at Province House in Halifax. Participants will have the opportunity to meet with politicians, debate topical issues, and attend workshops.

If you have students who are interested in attending, or if you are interested in participating as a teacher, contact Jennifer Burke, Social Studies Consultant, at burkejel@gov.ns.ca

High School Websites for Mathematics

In September 2009 three high school websites will be launched for Mathematics 10, Mathematics 11 and Advanced Mathematics 11, and Mathematics 12 and Advanced Mathematics 12. These websites, designed to support teachers, will include resources lists, professional learning opportunities, access to tutorials, access to the itembank, and new material designed to enhance the development of algebra in high school mathematics.

May is Gaelic Cultural Awareness Month

Co-operative Education (The community is our students' classroom)

The Department of Education is committed to the expansion of co-operative education and other forms of community-based learning to provide students with practical work experience opportunities and increase the involvement of communities in mentoring students.

Authentic work environments have proven to be very popular with our students. The 2008–2009 school year has seen expanded numbers in co-operative education course delivery. This year we have seen a 40% increase in the number of co-op credits taken. Since 2006 the number of high schools in Nova Scotia offering co-operative education has risen from 13 schools to 74 schools.

Co-operative education provides an opportunity at the high school level for a student to explore a career area by completing a minimum of 100 hours at a community placement. Prior to attending the placement, students must complete a 25-hour pre-placement component that emphasizes career planning, workplace cultures, and workplace health and safety.

Students must complete a LifeWork Portfolio and during their placement reflect on their learning through reflective writing and discussion.

Options and Opportunities Students Graduate

This year, more than 240 students who entered high school discouraged, lacking confidence or direction, disengaged and unlikely to succeed, will graduate through the Options and Opportunities program.

In addition to meeting all graduation requirements, these students will graduate with at least four co-operative education credits, a certificate in workplace health and safety, and a clear, solid career plan to carry them forward. Over 70% plan to continue their education in university, community college, apprenticeship, or the military.

Options and Opportunities is offered in 44 high schools.

Skilled Trades Education has begun in Nova Scotia.

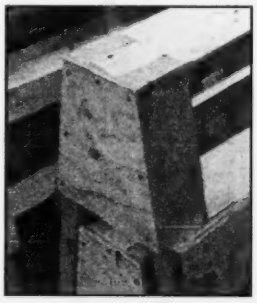
Implementation of Skilled Trades 10, a broad overview of the skilled trades as a possible career option for females and males, started in seven schools around the province in February 2009. Twenty-two of the 131 students taking Skilled Trades 10 in Nova Scotia are female.

Students are investigating the 61 designated trades in Nova Scotia and what making a living as a tradesperson could mean for them. When asked how his Skilled Trades 10 class was doing, Ferry Patterson, a Red Seal endorsed carpenter and Skilled Trades teacher at Annapolis West Education Centre, answered, "I couldn't be happier."

"I really like the hands-on learning," said one student at Hants East High School. For her and the rest of her class, hands-on means engagement. Skilled Trades 10 is meant to engage students as they study Skilled Trades Living, Safety, Measurement and Calculations, and Tools and Materials of the Skilled Trades.

Students work in specifically designed Skilled Trades Centres which provide learning spaces for both practical and academic learning.

Skilled Trades 10 is the first in a planned suite of skilled trades-related courses. The next, Construction Trades 11, is slated to begin in September, 2009.



Detail of student-built sawhorse with all cuts made using a hand saw.

Correspondence Studies
Various correspondence courses from grades 7 to 12 are available for students.
For more information, visit our website at http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca > Correspondence Studies or call (902) 424-4054

May is Asian Heritage Month

Yoga 11

In the coming school year, Yoga 11 will be offered as another public school program course option eligible to meet the physical education graduation requirement. Curriculum outcomes relate not only to physical activity, but also to other aspects of mental, emotional, social, and physical health.

The Yoga 11 approved local course has been well received by students in several schools within HRSB and CCRSB. It is evident that interest and engagement in this course continue to grow as more students vie for spots through the course selection process.

In addition to a valid NS Teacher's Licence, Yoga 11 teachers must be certified with a 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training course recognized by the National Yoga Alliance. Ten teachers from around the province participated in the training program last year, offered through Breathing Space Yoga Studio. This opportunity will be available to teachers again this year, beginning with a summer institute in August. For more information about the summer institute, please go to http://www.ednet.ns.ca

Geometry Update

During the 2009–2010 school year, grade 9 mathematics teachers will be implementing the new grade 9 geometry outcomes, which have been piloted this year. Teachers will have the opportunity to participate in inservicing for these outcomes. The sessions will provide teachers with time to explore the two geometry chapters included in the *Geometry Supplement* to *Mathematics 9: Focus on Understanding*.

Teachers have been introduced to electronic versions of diagrams from the text that have been created for their use for grade 8 and grade 9 geometry. It is anticipated that diagrams for grade 7 geometry will be completed and available by September. The diagrams are provided in several formats: *The Geometer's Sketchpad* and *Microsoft Word* for the 2-D materials, and *Google Sketchup* and image files for the 3-D diagrams. These diagrams are available for teacher use at http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca/PD/math.shtml

Health Education and Healthy Living

A new learning outcomes framework for health education primary–9 will be introduced to schools in September 2009. This learning outcomes framework will highlight a reduced number of outcomes at each grade level and focus on life skills to promote positive child and youth development in the areas of physical activity, healthy eating, substance use and gambling, sexual health, injury and disease prevention, and mental and emotional health.

Promoting positive self-identity, media literacy, and healthy decision-making are among the cornerstones that will frame the curriculum.

Healthy Mind, Healthy Body: Did You Know Daddy, I Feel Sad Sometimes, Grades 4–6, and *Healthy Mind, Healthy Body: I'm in Control, Grades 7–9* are two curriculum supplements addressing mental health that have been recently distributed to all teachers of grades 4–6 and teachers of Healthy Living 7–9.

The curriculum supplement for primary–3, *Healthy Mind, Healthy Body: My Health and My Brain* will be distributed to schools in the fall of 2009.

STARS (Summer Teachers' Astronomy Resource Seminar) July 27–29

Saint Mary's University will be hosting a three-day summer seminar for teachers interested in enhancing their skills and resources in astronomy. The series will be held July 27–29, with sessions from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and evening activities. The seminar will focus on the grade 9 curriculum, ranging from our dynamic sun, to the distant galaxies of the universe, to the amazing technology that is opening new windows on the cosmos.

Participants will engage in hands-on, minds-on learning activities for their classrooms and will receive a wealth of take-home materials and resources to enrich their teaching in future school years.

Activities will include a tour to the Burke-Gaffney Observatory, night-time observing (telescopes provided), a visit to Halifax's planetarium, and experiencing the 3-D immersive virtual environment in the SMU Data Cave.

Participants will attend short talks about current research provided by professional SMU astronomers. Lunches will be provided as well as a reception during the first evening. Enrollment is limited to 24 to ensure a high-quality experience. The fee per participant is $149.00. See http://ap.smu.ca/STARS for registration, and program details.

Science

BioBlitz 2009 June 5 and 6

BioBlitz is a taxonomic survey that identifies as many different species as possible in a 24-hour period. BioBlitz is designed to increase communities' awareness of the scientific importance of bio-diversity in our immediate neighbourhood and the valuable services that various animal and plant species provide to improve the quality of our lives.

This event brings elements of scientific research, education, and competition together.

For full details and a schedule, visit http://www.smu.ca/bioblitz or call 491-6276.

Arts Education

Bringing Arts to Life, the focus of Education Week 2009, was very successful in celebrating the role of arts education across the province. Dance, drama, music, and visual arts were showcased during the week of April 19–25, underscoring the importance of a quality arts education in a balanced program of studies.

In 2009–2010, grade 7 arts education curriculum will be available for implementation across the province. Three courses will be introduced: Band Instruments 7, Music 7, and Visual Arts 7. An implementation team will be assembled to facilitate professional learning workshops as requested by boards.

Applications for 2009–2010 Band Aid grants are now available, and schools are invited to apply. Please consult the website http://www.musicounts.ca for further information. Applications will be accepted from May 1 to August 4, 2009. This is an opportunity for schools to purchase new instruments for band programs, world drumming programs, and guitar ensembles. What a wonderful opportunity to secure inventory that will support the new curriculum that will be implemented at the junior high next year, as well as existing programs in our schools!

ARTS

Create! A New DVD about the Arts in Nova Scotian Schools

The Department of Education has launched *Create! Get Inspired by the Arts in Our Schools*, a new DVD which celebrates the recent past of arts education in our province, its vibrant present, and its promising future.

Recorded in schools across Nova Scotia by the media production unit of LRTS, *Create!* features the voices and activities of consultants, teachers, and students in a range of artistic genres at several grade levels, elementary to senior high. *Create!* is a tribute to the scope of Nova Scotian arts education and the outstanding achievements of our students and the many talented teachers who make the arts happen in classes and beyond them.

Copies of the DVD are available from the Media Library at LRTS in the Department. Please contact Stacey Cote (cotesl@gov.ns.ca; 424-2443).

May 31 is World No Tobacco Day

International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program

Over 300 International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma students are writing four to six IB examinations May 4–22. Their examination results will be combined with those of internal assessments already sent to the IB office in New York to provide a final set of marks. Students must earn at least 24 points out of a possible 45 to be awarded the IB Diploma.

In July, IB transcripts will be sent on-line to each student and to each university to which he/she has applied. In August 2009 the NS Department of Education will report on the results of our IB graduates compared to those of students in North America and the world.

In September 2009, the NS Department of Education hopes to introduce on-line IB courses in up to twelve schools including schools that do not offer the IB Diploma program. The courses currently available on-line are Economics—Standard and Higher Level, Business Management—Standard and Higher Level, and Information Technology in a Global Society—Higher Level.

Hackmatack Children's Book Awards

On May 8th, Pier 21 echoed with the cheers of over 400 excited young Nova Scotian readers as they came together to honour the winners of the 10th annual Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award.

Seventeen of the forty nominated-authors spent the week prior to the ceremony touring schools and libraries in all four Atlantic provinces. Here in Nova Scotia, there were more than 30 readings in schools from Cape Smokey to Yarmouth.

Thousands of students from grades 4, 5 and 6 cast ballots, and in the end chose these authors and books as the winners:

English Fiction - Jennifer McGrath Kent for *Chocolate River Rescue*

English Non-fiction - Ann Love and Jane Drake for *Sweet!: The Delicious Story of Candy*

French Fiction - *Capitaine Static* by Alain M. Bergeron

French Non-fiction - *Délirions avec Léon* by Annie Groovie

PRIX LITTÉRAIRE - LE CHOIX DES JEUNES
HACKMATACK
CHILDREN'S CHOICE BOOK AWARD

ArtReach

Spring 2009 has been busy for the ArtReach team, who installed prints and conducted workshops at Lunenburg Junior-Senior High School, Hants East High School and the Fortress of Louisburg.

In May, a selection of prints will be installed in the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library for a six-week period, for the use of teachers, students, and after-school programs in the area.

An exhibition will also be installed in mid-June at the Dartmouth Players Theatre to coincide with their production of the dramatic play "Art," running from June 10–27.

Learn more about ArtReach at http://www.artgalleryofnovascotia.ca/en/AGNS_Halifax/learn/schools/artreach

Who's New in Public Schools Branch?

Learning Disabilities Consultant

Annie Baert has joined the Department of Education as the Learning Disabilities Consultant in the Student Services Division. Annie is well known within the learning disabilities network as a result of her work as the Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of Nova Scotia. Annie will support the development and implementation of a provincial Learning Disabilities Strategy. She can be reached at 424-2128 or by email at baertap@gov.ns.ca

May 18 is International Museums Day

Family Studies: Real Care Baby II has been delivered!

Two schools in every region that implemented the new Child Studies 11 curriculum last year received a set of Real Care Baby II manikins for classroom use.

The set included five babies for student practicum use and also two demonstration babies for classroom instruction: Drug Affected Baby and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Baby. The latter two are used to initiate discussion about the effects of drugs and alcohol on an unborn child.

It is recommended that students in Child Studies 11 and Child Studies 9 have the opportunity to work with the Real Care Babies to better understand some of the responsibilities of parenthood. When the baby cries, the student caregiver needs to decide on the appropriate response, which is recorded for a report to the teacher.

The babies even arrive with a breast-feeding device to encourage discussion about the value of breastfeeding.

The Real Care Baby is available for ordering through the NS School Book Bureau.

Family Studies 10: A New Approach!

Family Studies 10 has been developed as five half-credit courses to allow schools flexibility of offerings in the fall of 2009:

- Food for Healthy Living 10
- Food Technology 10*
- Food Preparation and Service 10*
- International Foods 10
- Textile Production 10*

Courses designated by * are eligible technology half-credits for graduation requirements.

Family Studies Curriculum Update

Family Studies curriculum has been updated to address some of the challenges faced by today's families. Identified needs included education on healthy food preparation, clothing maintenance and care, and skills in financial management and wise consumer decision making related to basic family needs.

New Textile Arts 7 and Family Studies 10 curricula will be introduced in 2009–2010. Implementation workshops for teachers of Textile Arts 7 and Family Studies 10 will be offered in the fall.

Implementation of Food and Nutrition 8 curriculum and resources has been deferred to the 2010–2011 school year.

The new courses focus on skill development through lab experiences. The curriculum for each grade level incorporates outcomes that reflect healthy choices, use of technology to enhance skills, and development of skills to support individual and family development within society.

Family Studies Resources

New titles have been added to *Authorized Learning Resources* to support students and teachers. Textile Arts 7 and Family Studies 10 resources will be provided to schools to support implementation. Using Nova Scotia resources is a strong focus throughout the Family Studies program.

Websites identified as resources for Family Studies curricula may be found at the Department of Education Website (http://www.ednet.ns.ca) under Educators > Classroom & Curriculum Resources > Curriculum-related web sites > Family Studies

Public Schools Branch consists of the following Divisions:

African Canadian Services	902-424-3151	acsd@ednet.ns.ca	http://acs.ednet.ns.ca
Diversity, Equity, and Special Projects	902-722-1405	smithcla@gov.ns.ca	
Education Quality Services	902-424-0040	crandase@gov.ns.ca	
English Program Services	902-424-8945	eps@ednet.ns.ca	http://eps.ednet.ns.ca
Evaluation Services	902-424-7746	testeval@ednet.ns.ca	http://plans.ednet.ns.ca
French Second Language Program Services	902-424-6646	fls@ednet.ns.ca	
Learning Resources and Technology Services	902-424-2462	lrt@ednet.ns.ca	http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca
Mi'kmaq Liaison Office	902-424-3428	Palmatcj@gov.ns.ca	http://mikmaq.ednet.ns.ca
Student Services	902-424-7454	studentsvcs@ednet.ns.ca	
Regional Education Services	902-424-5799	(Halifax - SSRSB, HRSB) 902-424-6097 (Halifax - CSAP)	
	902-563-2080	(Sydney - CBVRSB)	
	902-893-5890	(Truro - CCRSB, SRSB)	
	902-742-3427	(Yarmouth - TCRSB, AVRSB)	
Senior Executive Director	902-424-5829	lowead@gov.ns.ca	

Nova Scotia Department of Education website: http://www.ednet.ns.ca
Toll Free Access to Department 1-888-825-7770